

## Conversation with 17 year old white male, White Pine, Tennessee (Transcription)

Well, what kind of effect has the new school had on kids who go there from White Pine?

S Well, I think it uh, back at White Pine I used to, seems like back at White Pine I used

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to, before I got out and explored a little bit, going to different parts of the country, I used to think that White Pine, that White Pine was a big city, and that Knoxville uh was one of the biggest in the world, and then when I got down to the high school. I figured that White Pine was just a little place because here we had this big school, not all these people, when White Pine, they're having graduating classes of three hundred and fifty and then the freshman class this year is a little over five hundred and forty, (uh-huh) and then to think that White Pine's graduating class when my sister graduated in sixty seven was thirty, that's quite a change there. (uh-huh) I think it makes people uh, mostly down at the school I think uh the quality of education is less because uh down there there are so many block courses, three hour blocks, such as building trades, uh cosmetology, and things like this. Cosmetology, if you take cosmetology, you go in, you take cosmetology three hours a day for three or four years. Well that then when you take your American history and your English, that's all you can take your senior year is your history, you r English, and your cosmetology. (uh-huh) Your junior year you take your English and economics and cosmetology, and then you have a half a year elective, and then your sophomore year

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you have your health and PE, that's one, and then your three hours cosmetology, leaving one elective, and that way you get very little math, and I fe-, and I feel that mathematics is one of the most important things in the world. (uh-huh) I don't think anybody could succeed without mathematics, cause, maybe it's because I like the subject better than any subject that I've ever had. (uh-huh) I think people need that more than anything, and I think that being able to not get it, and then uh they let so many of 'em, like these cosmetology students and all, they'll go in their freshman year. They're required one year of math. They'll go in and take general math. Then they know nothing of algebra and geometry, trigonometry, advanced math and all that, and a lot of 'em uh can't do simple addition and subtraction without making lots of mistakes, and I think that's a big mistake. And in the English Department my biggest gripe is uh grammar. Your freshman year you have half a year of grammar. Your sophomore year you have about nine weeks of grammar. That's

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all the high school grammar you get until your senior year. You may, your A and B students sometimes take advanced composition, (uh-huh) and, which most of 'em do very poorly in it because they know very little grammar, and I think, and I think grammar and math has really been hurt down at the new school. And back at White Pine <unintelligible text> always taught half a year of grammar, half a year of literature all four years. That way you'd get at least two years of grammar. Down there you get at the very maximum, you would get just a little over a year.

M: Why is grammar that important?

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S: Because uh I can't write a simple letter without, and then go back over it. When I go back over a simple letter I've written, I find just thousands of mistakes. Well, not thousands, but several mistakes, and then when I read somebody else's paper that's not taken advanced composition or something like this, I find several mistakes, and a lot of people down there, they can't pick out a few simple parts of speech, like can't pick out the subjects and verbs in sentences, juniors and seniors in high school, (hmm) and I think they're teaching more literature and less grammar, and I think, especially for me, wanting to be a lawyer, that I need more grammar, because, especially in contracts, because a lots of lawyers take contracts at their word, literally what they say. (uh-huh) and sometimes they change it to mean what they want, and I think if, the more grammar you know, the better you'd be able to twist something up and make it say what you wanted it to, which (I see) and you know lawyers do do that a lot (uh-huh) and need to sometimes to win their case. (uh-huh) But other than that I think the school, I like all the administration. I've never met any, except one <unintelligible text> teacher I've never been able to get along with, and <unintelligible text>. He's, I never did we-, never was able to get along with him. I mean he's, he's all right as long as I'm not in second period annual staff. He'll speak to me. But when I'm in second period annual staff, he's all the time hollering at me, etcetera, etcetera, but at church, he, at church, at school other than second period. At lunch, if I talk to him in his office or something, he's just as nice as he can be. He's one of my best friends to, like he'll take and

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then when I'm in the annual staff, it's just a completely different story, and I, he's that way to everybody on the annual staff. You could talk to some more of them. Well they's not any from White Pine besides me and another'n, (hmm) and she's dropped it now, so I'm

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the only White Pine representative on the annual staff, and he's that way to everybody, and everybody feels it, and everybody knows that it's just a political difference with him and <unintelligible text>. (uh-huh) I like politics, but I think poli-, they's a place and time for politics.

M: Uh-huh. Oh yeah. What do you do on a typical day?

S: Well, I, on a typical day, I usually go to school. I, first of all I go to my English and sit there through, through that if I can tolerate it all period, taking my notes and all, and second period I go to annual staff, and then annual staff I'm just doing lots of different things. Uh one day I'll take pictures and the next day I'll develop film and the next day I'll print pictures. Like today pictures for the FFA calendar, for the yearbook, for the FFA staff, and just mostly FFA pictures today, for them and for the yearbook and for the paper too, and then I go to Algebra Two, which I messed up, because I took General Math my freshman year because I just figured it'd be easier. So I took it, and then now this year I take my Algebra Two. Then I take. I did take a novels course last semester, and now I'm taking trigometry, (uh-huh) having to double up on my math this year because I didn't get it my freshman year, and then I go to my history and take history and that's, then I come home and I usually sit around and watch Batman and then I do my homework, eat, and do some more studying and then go to bed, and that's about all I do unless you go to the library and talk to <unintelligible text> Then when I go get a book at the library it usually takes an hour and a half at least. My father said that I could spend more time in the library and get less books than any one person.

M: She's a lot of fun to talk to.

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S: She is, but uh, as you know, she's on the <unintelligible text>, (uh-huh) and I think, don't say that I ever said it, but uh she lets her political feelings go a lot too, because uh,

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if you asks her to bring something up, if she feels that it might hurt her politically, or make somebody mad at her, she says "I think you should bring this to, to another one of the <unintelligible text> members, because she just don't want to bring it up, because they's a lot of people, (hmm) a lot of people are discriminatory. They even told her one time that they didn't think that she should be allowed to be <unintelligible text>, since she was not a native of the United States. Most people, as a rule, in White Pine are very nice people.

M: But does that make any sense to you, that she wasn't born here?

S: No, the only person I think that should be required to be born in the United States would be the President and the Vice-President, (hmm) and I do think they should be for certain reasons. (uh-huh) Just, if nothing else, just as a symbol, uh so they can say "I'm from an American background." You wouldn't want an American President that was a Russian or something like that, or English or something like that.

M: No, no, not even a Henry Kissinger, who's been here most of his life anyway.

S: Uh-huh. I wouldn't want nothing like that, because people would say "They've got a Jew in the White House. They've got a Russian in the White House" something like that,

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and I think it would lead to a lot of trouble abroad especially. Talk and all. And a lot of, the people in the United States probably wouldn't have as much confidence in 'em, just because the, like if the, if it were a Democrat running, Republicans would certainly make a big deal of 'em not being an American, (uh-huh) and then the, likewise with the Democrats if it was a Republican.

M: Uh-huh. Well, you don't remember, but when John Kennedy was running for President #124-31 is M telling about anti-Kennedy and anti-Catholic sentiment. At school are there social groups or social crowds? Do people tend to separate into groups?

S: Very much so.

M: We used to call them cliques when I was back in high school. What's it like over at Jefferson County?

S: Well, I'd say there's several different groups. I guess you have your scholars in one, or your smarter people. They seem to, seem to cling together a lot. And then your ath-

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letes. They're high up on the social status at the school, (uh-huh) and then uh I think the athletes and the A and B students are about the highest, and then you're have the middle group and then the lower groups and people cling to get in the, people don't really come out and say, "Well, I'm in the high group; You're in the low group. I'm in the middle group; You're in the high school." something like that, but everybody feels it, I mean. (uh-huh)

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Like the annual staff. The annual staff is placed above so-, not really above, but I mean, the annual staff is really put in a group because a lot of the staff says "Hey, you're on the annual staff. Could you get my picture <gap> ?" you know, and things like that, and I mean people always immediately recognize the annual staff, so they can <gap> (haha) And all the time when I'm walking down the hall, people'll just fall into a natural pose on purpose, not even, and I'm sure they do it for the paper staff too. <gap> Uh-huh, uh-huh. But when I was in school, you know, even people from certain neighborhoods would stick together, (uh-huh) because they considered themselves better than people from other neighborhoods, or people who came from other schools. <gap> Well, that's the way it is down there too, I think. I think uh, I don't think any major city is uh discriminated against most. I guess if anybody it would be the blacks, I think. (uh-huh) They're discriminated against quite a bit down there by students more than teachers. Uh a lot of the students won't talk to other blacks, or and then a lot of the blacks like to be very friendly with the whites. I mean just walk up and blend in with the group, uh (uh-huh) like a boy with a group of girls, and like that, and I think the ones that do that are sort of thought of as outcasts by a lot of the others, because a black guy trying to associate with a whole bunch of white girls, and it just, a lot of people won't talk to them then,(uh-huh)